

The Role of Baptism in Salvation

This past week, while reading a religious book, I came across a particular paragraph that has troubled me. Throughout this book, the author has prided himself on quoting Scripture. In fact, he says that he has quoted over 1,000 verses in his book. However, there is an important paragraph that contains an idea that does not have a single Scripture attached to it. It is a paragraph about salvation.

The author affirms, as so many in our religious world do, that a simple prayer will save a man. He says that all we have to say is “Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you” and we will have eternal life. The interesting thing is that out of the 1,000 passages that he quotes throughout this book, there is not a single verse that is quoted with regards to this idea. The reason is simple: there is no verse in the Bible that gives us this idea.

Later in this book, the author does talk about baptism. However, he says that baptism does not save a person; it is only a sign to others that you are a Christian. Again, out of over 1,000 verses that are quoted in this book, not one of them is used in his discussion of baptism. Again, the reason is simple: there is no verse in the Bible that gives us this idea.

There is no doubt that God wants us to be saved (*I Tim. 2:3-4; II Pet. 3:9*). Because of this desire, God sent His only Son into the world to die on the cross (*Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 3:16*). The death that Jesus suffered was for everyone (*Heb. 2:9*). It is only through that death that we can have the hope of eternal life.

The Bible tells us that there are several things that are necessary for our salvation. We are saved by grace (*Eph. 2:8*), mercy (*Titus 3:5*), love (*Eph. 2:4-5*), faith (*I Pet. 1:9*), and works (*Js. 2:24*). Numerous others could also be listed. If any of these are taken away, salvation is not possible. It is true that it is only through Christ that we can have salvation, but it is also true that God expects obedience from us. Therefore, we cannot underestimate the role of baptism.

It is baptism that puts us into Christ (*Gal. 3:27*). It is in the act of baptism that we see the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (*Rom. 6:1-4*). Throughout the book of Acts, every one that was converted was immediately baptized based upon their faith in Christ. The Bible is very clear that baptism is necessary for salvation.

It is important to understand that this does not mean that we can earn our salvation. God has given us the opportunity to be saved through the death of Jesus on the cross. Now He expects us to obey Him in baptism. God has done His part; have you done yours?